

Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Girard, OH

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 200 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Girard for a Brownfields Pilot. The city (population 11,304), historically known for steel production, was established along the Mahoning River, a tributary of the Ohio River. Many of the steel mills along the Mahoning River have closed, causing significant job loss, decrease in population, reduction in the tax base, inability to clean up related environmental problems, and a transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a service- and retail-based economy. Today, the city is slowly rebounding from the 1970s downsizing of the steel industry. Many scars and reminders in the form of abandoned buildings and vacant lots, however, mark the city's history as a mill town. The Trumbull County Planning Commission has estimated that the city has about 173 acres of unused brownfields, which is about 20 percent of the city's available industrial land.

The Pilot will focus on the site of the former Ohio Leather Company plant, which produced calfskin leather for more than 70 years. After its closure in 1972, the plant sat idle for almost two decades until a 1995 fire destroyed all existing buildings. The 27-acre site is located near the gateway to the city and is bordered by a disadvantaged neighborhood (nearly 50 percent of the residents lack a high school diploma), an active steel plant, and the Mahoning River. About a quarter of the site was used for storage of scrap titanium for reuse in the steel industry. The site is also littered

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Girard, Ohio

Date of Announcement:
March 1999

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets the 27-acre former Ohio Leather Company site located along the Mahoning River.

Contacts:

Trumbull County Planning
Commission
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Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 5
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Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

with scrap tires, used grinding wheels, brick, and other materials left behind after the fire. Prior efforts to get the site owner to clean up the property have failed, and the city is currently in negotiations to acquire the property. The city is targeting this site because of community need, the site's visibility, proximity to the Mahoning River, overall development potential, and its location in a state-designated enterprise zone.

OBJECTIVES

With this project, the Pilot's objectives are to supplement city efforts to organize a Brownfields Task Force, bring new jobs to the community, provide additional skilled labor for the city's work force, increase the city's tax base, and improve the standard of living in the surrounding neighborhoods. An important component of the Pilot is to provide special outreach to the affected neighborhoods and directly solicit their input about site cleanup and redevelopment. The city hopes that cleanup and redevelopment of the property will alleviate environmental and aesthetic problems, and prevent new problems from occurring by requiring new facilities to employ the best available pollution control and pollution prevention technologies and practices. Further, the city will develop a set of site-specific development guidelines that employ sustainable reuse principles to ensure that future use of the property will play a role in the long-term sustainability of the Mahoning River Corridor.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Evaluating the targeted property's suitability for participation in Ohio's Voluntary Action Program;
- Conducting Phase I and II site assessments at the Ohio Leather Company site, and investigating three other known brownfields;
- Planning for site cleanup and redevelopment activities at the Ohio Leather Company site;
- Supporting efforts to protect and revitalize the Mahoning River Corridor; and
- Developing public education programs regarding the Ohio Leather Company site.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.